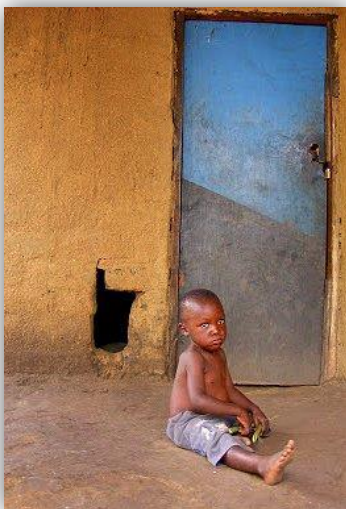




ORBUS AUSTRALIA
NEWSLETTER
JANUARY TO APRIL 2013



*“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...
defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Proverbs 31:8-9*

Orbus Australia is a Christian not-for-profit volunteer charity which exists to demonstrate the love of God through word and deed to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The Orbus Centre in Ngumbe, Blantyre, Malawi is a joint project between Orbus Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Australia) and the CCAP Blantyre Synod. We invite you to visit the Orbus Australia website at www.orbusafrica.org, to view the [Orbus Photo Albums](#) and to visit the Orbus Centre in Malawi.

Orbus Australia Update:

The Orbus School: The Orbus Kindergarten and Junior Primary School (up to and including grade three) are going well. There is a teaching headmaster, two qualified teachers and four volunteer teachers. **The Orbus Farm:** During the period there was good growth in pig and goat numbers and some income from pig, goat and chicken sales. Some crops were planted in December 2012, with some of them failing but some maize being harvested and sold during the period. Income was reasonable but not as good as expected due to lack of widespread crop planting in December 2012. Overall the farm did not perform as expected.

Comments from 2012 Visitors to the Orbus Centre:

Due to there being no Australian visitors to the Orbus Centre at Ngumbe, Malawi, from January to April 2013 and limited reports and photos received from Malawi, this newsletter highlights a number of comments, quotes and photos from visitors to the Centre during 2012, mostly taken from visitor's blogs. We hope these excerpts may encourage new visitors to Orbus in Malawi:

"One glance at (the) Orbus property, even from the main road between Blantyre and Lilongwe, tells you immediately that this is a visionary, well cared for and purposeful project. It is, in fact, an APWM approved mission work of the highest order. And I am inviting both the Mod-Gen of the GAA and the in-coming Moderator of the PCV to include a visit to the site in their itineraries if they can. It is a sweet haven of protection and Christian love for the most vulnerable people on earth. It ministers the love of Christ for them. It deserves our ongoing commitment." **Rev. John Wilson (Assembly Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria).**

In her remarks during the official opening of the new Standards 2 and 3 classes at the Orbus Junior Primary School on September 4th 2012 Deputy District Education Manager Mrs. Gertrude Ulaya (from the Malawian government education ministry) could not hide her excitement with the Orbus Junior Primary School saying:

"Orbus Junior Primary School will help learners do better in school. Most of the times learners are absent due to fatigue after walking long distances which leads to poor performance and increased dropout rate at early stage. You have shortened the distance to be covered by pupils which is in line with government's policy to provide education to pupils within a recommended catchment area. This new school has indeed complemented government efforts to promote education in Malawi."

She further appreciated the agricultural components at the Orbus Centre saying it will help pupils in their practical education. "I have heard in your speech that you have a vision of developing this Centre to a full primary school, have a secondary and college right here. I should then commend you for the agricultural component you have because as the pupils go to Standard 5 and above, they learn a lot of science subjects like agriculture which include crop and animal husbandry which are practiced here. This is great!" **said a joyful Ulaya.**

Ulaya was also pleased to note that the Orbus Centre's principles are Bible based. "I am delighted that you emphasize on biblical principles because in so doing these children will not only improve academically but also spiritually because we know the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

In April/May 2012 a short-term team from the Frankston Presbyterian Church volunteered at the Orbus Centre. Some select comments and photos from Alicia Otten's blog follows:

"Matt, Pip, Casey, James, Mark, Dad and I are heading off on an African Adventure! We will be going to Blantyre, Malawi to work with the Manners family at Orbus. (Learn more about Orbus at <http://orbusafrica.org/>). We will be away for 31 days."

"Today we experienced what Orbus does for the first time. We created a bit of a distraction for the kindy class as we walked in. The kids all got high fives from all of us which they love. We met the teachers and then continued on to tour the grounds. Flossy (one of the paid teachers) found out that Casey works in natural medicine and proceeded to show her all the different plants on site that can treat different illnesses."



"This is Florence (above right). We were told she was the first child to come to Orbus. The kids are a little shy still, but are quite happy to wave at the camera. Mark proceeded to teach them Aussie, Auisse, Aussie, Oi, Oi, Oi. He tried to teach them the Essendon theme song but that didn't work very well so we sang "Father Abraham" instead. As the kid's slowly left for home, we high fived goodbye and yelled "tionana" which means "see you later" in chichewa. We then went back to the Manners place."



"We needed to do some shopping so I volunteered to stay home with the boys so Craig and Jayni could shop easier. Jayni said she doesn't think she's ever been out of the house without the boys since they've been in Malawi. James stayed behind with me too as the boys have a fear of "girl germs":.)"

"There is a fuel shortage here at the moment and fuel queues can go for a kilometre. We picked up Craig for work this morning as they only have a little fuel left and want to save for when they search for fuel. When we walked into the kindy classroom, the main teacher, Zulu, asked us to teach the class for the morning. They study colours, letters, seasons, and days of the week. They only have class for about

2 hours then they all go to the toilet. It's quite funny actually the teacher says "go for wee wee" and all the kids file out yelling in unison "go for wee wee, go for wee wee";).

"Today us girls were asked to teach the Standard 1 class next week. We started setting up the standard 1 classroom ready for Monday. Craig also met with the artist who painted the beautiful pictures in the kindy classroom to decide what to do with the Standard 1 classroom. Craig asked our opinion on what sort of aids to paint on the walls, so we spent a bit of time brainstorming ideas together. The painter starts next week."

"Craig came over to the storeroom and asked us to look after a little girl who's "agogo" (grandmother) had not come to pick her up yet. Casey found a cricket set and taught her how to play cricket. A few kids who were waiting with parents for Bibles joined in as well. The little girl's name is Esther."



Another lady turned up for a Bible who spoke very good English, so we asked her to interpret for us and find out where the little girl lived. We managed to work it out eventually and Pip and I drove Esther, Violet (our interpreter) and Violet's son home. It wasn't far from Orbus, and we managed to make sure Esther found her brother Innocent before leaving. Violet lived even closer to Orbus so we dropped her home too, with many thanks."

"The Manners boys just adore Matt, James and Mark and were a little disappointed to find that us girls weren't as good at soccer. Casey and Pip talked with Jayni and I attempted to convince the boys that girls aren't all that gross. I taught them how to sword fight with paw paw branches for swords and big paw paw leaves for shields. Even little J.J. liked sword fighting (he is 1 1/2).

I got a little tired and so followed the other girls back inside. The boys followed and we had a conversation about Lego which they are just mad about. J.J. then gave me a book to read and after having read it twice insisted I read it again. So I started making up different stories to the pictures in the books for him. The older boys all crowded in to find out what happened in these new stories and together we came up with some hilarious endings. I taught them some games we play back home then like "wink murder" and "the animal game". Little J.J. even joined in and would "die" when winked at by one of his brothers. Little Ben who is 4 had too much energy to sit quietly and play and wrestled me at every break in the game:). I then "read their minds" with a magic card trick. By the time Craig came back to look after the boys while we went shopping I was thoroughly fired out and left the boys wondering whether I really was a girl after all:).

"Craig took us all out to meet the Masters family, a family made up of 4 siblings, Godfrey 18, Fastania 17, Cecilia 15, and Manuel 12. They lost their parents 3 years ago and ever since then Fastania has been Mum and carer to all of them. Manuel was brain damaged from cerebral malaria at quite a young age and can't do anything for himself. He is quite wasted away as his muscles are never used and it was little bit of a shock for us girls. He has a huge smile though and seems very happy. The poverty we saw was just heart wrenching yet this family was one of the happiest I've seen. Fastania gave us all a big hug before even being introduced to us and made us welcome in their tiny brick home. As we prepared to leave Fastania said "God is good!" It was definitely an eye opening experience for all of us."

"The Manners had no power all night and all day and then their water went off too. All Jayni's freezer had defrosted and had to be thrown out. Jayni said that this used to really frustrate her, but now she's used to it and just accepts it."

"The kids (at Orbus) seem to have picked up cricket quite well, though the crowding in waiting for a turn to bat is a problem. They don't seem to have any concept of sharing here and will just knock a kid over the head if they want something they have."

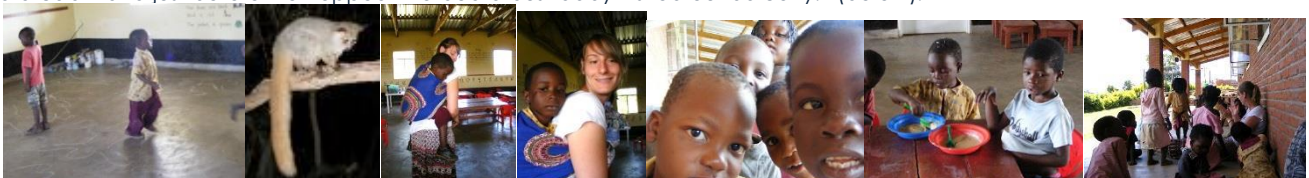


"Above (left) is Joshua and Pip. Joshua fell over yesterday and Pip fixed him up. Since then he's followed her around everywhere. The other teachers said she'll probably have to take him home with her:). This is what happens when you try and fix your hair (above). The kids just love to play with my hair and as soon as I sit down they are in it. Don't really know what they do but I had a few big knots after this."

"We all got up early today to farewell the Manners (25-4-12). We met at their house at 7am for coffee before heading out to work at Orbus. We all had work to do so we said our quick goodbyes and headed out to Orbus by 8am. I'm going to miss the Manners. Malawi won't be nearly as welcoming without them." (Editor's note: But they are not required to be in Malawi for you to visit and make a difference at the Centre, as the Frankston team proved over the following two weeks by themselves.)

"School today was more of the same with play dough again. A new teacher started today and helped us out in the standard 1 class."

On a weekend visit to Majete National Park staying in a safari lodge on the Shire River, about 2.5 hours sw of Blantyre: "Debbie and I shared a cabin and just before we hopped into bed a bushbaby visited our balcony." (below).



"The kids only spent half the day writing and spent the other half painting. We let them draw chalk outlines of their bodies on the classroom floor today (above), as we mop it each day anyway. They thought it was marvellous and spent quite a while experimenting with lying different ways. This little boy, (on Pip's back above), is naughty nearly every day but just adores Pip. After playing up in the classroom and being punished he gets sulky and will hang on to Pip's skirt for an hour or more. I had brought my chitchengi skirt today so Pip experimented tying him on her back. She was already carrying him around but as soon as she grabbed the chitchengi he immediately adopted the correct position. The other children laughed to see him on Pip's back. He was quite happy though and would've stayed there for hours, but Pip didn't think it was secure enough. Us girls think it's a fantastic way to cart your kids around."



"Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous." Psalm 37:16-17

In June/July 2012 a STAMP (Short Term Africa Mission Partners) team of visitors from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in Australia visited the Orbus Centre. Below are some excerpts from members of this team taken from their blogs:

"On route to our accommodation the Synod bus pulls into the CCAP Ministry to Orphans called ORBUS, funded essentially by Australian donors from the PCV. This is an outstanding project. The landscape is restful and refreshing, the buildings are solid and fully functional and a credit to designer and builder and funder. The surrounding farm with its goats and pigs, banana and mango trees, tomatoes and maize are simply amazing.

Orbus is a haven of peace ... a house of mercy for children of Africa with no parents to love or care for them.

Rising above the turbulence of some difficult days this ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is emerging into something of strategic importance for the Presbyterian Church of Blantyre Synod. The STAMP team walked into this compound and felt there is something special here. It's a ministry we can be "proud" of and a gift from PCV to Blantyre Synod for which the Synod is becoming increasingly grateful."



The Warm Heart of Africa: "We had the opportunity to visit Orbus Orphanage yesterday. We walked into two classes with older children and younger, the children sang songs to us such as Jesus loves me, open shut them, head and shoulders. We were able to sit among the children as they sat and listened to a story about a kangaroo and the story of the Good Samaritan. The children were inquisitive about us, touching our hair and comparing skin colour. We then had free play with them, they follow you everywhere and love to see themselves on camera.

I sat to feed some children before saying our goodbyes. Later that afternoon we went back to Orbus to help with the Women's Ministry. The ladies spoke no English however they were learning knitting and for the first time we taught them to do coiling with paper, each picked it up quickly and created some beautiful cards.

Thanks for your continued prayers and support,

God is truly at work here in Malawi."

Kylie and Amy

Orphans at Orbus: "I had the opportunity to go to Orbus Orphanage to see how its run. On arrival the children where in there level 1 & 2 classes, when we walked into the level 1 class they were singing 'rain, rain go away' as the night before they had a bit of rain. The children were so beautiful and so fascinated by our while skin, they just wanted to hold your hand or touch your face or hair. I just want to embrace them all.

We then headed into the level 2 class they were just finishing off some maths, you could really see some children eager to learn, heads down in their bookwork. The children sang songs to us while we sat with them to join in. Children are the same no matter where you go, I sat next to a group of girls, one wouldn't stop looking at me she would grab my hand and started comparing it to hers, then she played with my hair and wanted to wear my glasses, they just were in need to love and that's what I had for each and every one of them. God has truly grown Orbus and I see great things to come.



We then had free time of play with the children and they would follow you anywhere, I sat on the grass with 2 children and started singing song the next thing I know I'm surrounded by them, It was so beautiful and a moment I will never forget.

There was one little girl there who didn't have a name that we know of. She was born with cerebral Malaria she was 4 years old and unable to care for herself, she learnt to walk with assistance just recently thanks to the facility of Orbus, she was in need of one of one time, I sat her on a chair and we spent time throwing a ball back and forwards, the smile on her face was priceless. I also had the opportunity to help feed some of the younger children.

That afternoon they had a ladies Ministry at Orbus where ladies came to learn how to knit and for the first time we taught them how to coil with paper, they loved it and made amazing creations.

In the room next door there was the village chief who brought with him the most needy of the village, there bags of clothes and shoes and items of needs where distributed. We were invited to hand bags of items from Australia to a member of CCAP who then passed it to the village people. It was a beautiful thing to be apart of and to see once again how through the support of those in Australia we could support the most vulnerable and needy."

Defend the cause of the Fatherless: "One afternoon I was taken out to Orbus, a place whose motto is 'Defend the cause of the fatherless'. I hadn't had the opportunity to see the property since 2008 when generous Australians took a 99 yr lease on this land to be used for orphans and vulnerable children. Then the land was bare except for an old tobacco building. The development of the property has been amazing. Now there are 2 large brick dormitories, used as classrooms, an outside kitchen, a general storeroom and right now 2 new classrooms with offices attached are being built. The grounds have been developed with maize, tomatoes and various other vegetables. Fruit trees are growing in an orchard area and are all watered by an irrigating system with water from the river. The newest additions are goats to raise for selling as well as a small pig pen with 2 of the sows pregnant. This week they are starting to construct a chicken run. All this has been possible by the continuing support of Australians and the work of Malawian and Aust. volunteers. More info is on the www.OrbusAfrica.org website.

I also was able to see some children receive clothing sent over in the containers. It was a bit overwhelming, but so pleasing, for me to see the 'end of the chain' after we'd boxed and packed clothes for these and other children. The clothes they had on would've been their only set and were coming apart all over. It was such a delight to be able to give them something clean and 'new' to wear. The Chief of the village thanked Australia for thinking of them and assured us they were giving the clothes to those 'that were lacking' or the vulnerable. So THANKYOU to every one of you who thought of these children and packed clothes for them; God bless you."

Afternoon at Orbus: "We were privileged this afternoon to witness the first handover of donations to some of the most vulnerable children in villages surrounding Orbus. Senior personnel from the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC), two village chiefs and several of the STAMP team were present. It had been decided that it was important to involve the village chiefs in formulating lists of those in most need. It was exciting to see the cooperation and respect between the Synod, Orbus and the village chiefs.

Today's gathering was the initial stage in the process of distributing goods from the containers. Lonnie Ncozana (Director of BSHDC) encouraged the community to look after Orbus and protect it from vandalism. It was beautiful to hear Lonnie explain to the villagers how they knew if any of the articles they received were not suitable for them personally, they would pass them on to others within the village and that they would continue the process of identifying the most vulnerable."

Thanks, Judy and Melody

"God takes peculiar care of the poor (Ex 22:23, Deut. 15:9 and 24:15), though they are commonly despised. He does not allow oppression inflicted on them to pass unpunished. From this consideration, the poor and weak ought to derive consolation and more calmly endure distresses and afflictions, because they learn that God takes care of them and will not permit injustice done to them to go unpunished."
(John Calvin)



Photos and Items of Interest:

Past newsletters for Orbus are available online at OrbusAfrica.org. Please feel free to distribute Orbus newsletters.

For a selection of past photos of the Orbus ministry in Malawi, and for a selection of photos from the Frankston team's visit in April/May 2012 please visit: [Orbus Web Albums](#).



Please view an interesting [video clip on poverty](#) from PovertyCure.org, of which Orbus Australia is a network member.

To learn more about our partners in Malawi please visit: www.blantyresynod.org/ and www.bshdc.org. If you would like to keep up to date with news in Malawi visit the local news sites: www.mwnation.com/ and www.nyasatimes.com/.

Prayer Requests:

- For God's gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ for each of the children attending the Orbus Centre.
- For the salvation of souls in the wider area -Ngumbe, Kameza, Lunzu, Nansengwe, Malunga, Mulenga and Daniel Villages.
- For the neediest of the children in the area to come to the Centre.
- For Orbus teachers, staff and volunteers to have a deeper and growing love for OVC, the poor and the neediest in the community and to be selfless, generous and wise in trying to love them.
- For the children who are HIV+.
- For the street children in Blantyre and Ndirande.
- For the expansion of the Orbus Junior Primary School.
- For the protection of the Orbus Centre.
- For God to provide a long-term Orbus Australia representative to be based in Blantyre to assist the Synod at the Orbus Centre and to conduct general orphan care ministry in Malawi.
- For more local and foreign volunteers to come to the Orbus Centre.
- For Orbus staff and volunteers: Wills, Esther, Grace, Zulu, Esme, Triffania, Faris, Lamech, Felix, Leonard, James, John.
- Give thanks for the contribution of all past local staff and volunteers and for God to richly bless them and their families; specifically for Ellen, Flossy, Rhoda, Blessings, Davey, Benson, Mjojo and John.
- For Synod and BSHDC leadership: Alex, Mercy, Cliff, Andrew and Lonnie.
- Give thanks for Debbie Eve and her much appreciated local help to Orbus generally.
- Thank God for Malawi's continued peaceful political and economic turnaround.
- Pray for President Joyce Banda and her Cabinet. Pray that President Banda will remain faithful to her publicly declared trust in Jesus and fear of God and rule this country with godly wisdom. That she will protect the weak, the poor and vulnerable in her society, especially the many hundreds of thousands of orphaned children. That she will restrain corruption and the devastating impact this has on the weak, poor and vulnerable.

In Jesus Name,

Craig Manners



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"A very good way of testing any view that you may hold is to ask, 'Is this view humbling to me and glorifying to God?' If it is, it is probably right. You will not go far wrong if whatever you are holding is glorifying God and humbling man. But if your view seems to glorify you and to query God, there is no need to argue or to go into details - it is wrong." Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones